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Official Translation

EAST TIMOR
NATIONAL COMMAND OF THE MAUBERE RESISTANCE
LIBERATION ARMED FORCES OF EAST TIMOR

His Excellency
Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali
Secretary-General of the United Nations

Your Excellency,

With respectful compliments and, on behalf of the people of East Timor, I have the honour to greet Your Excellency as the highest-ranking officer of the United Nations.

Your election constituted yet another victory for the Third World, symbol of North-South disparities. Your brilliant career and rich diplomatic experience, as well as the fact that you have a first-hand knowledge of the plight of the Palestinian and Saharawi peoples, give us confidence that Your Excellency will not forget the existence of a people, in Oceania, a people fighting for the universal rights enshrined in the United Nations Charter.

The signing of the Salvadorean peace agreement, right at the beginning of your mandate, filled the people of East Timor with joy and hope for their aspirations; we are conscious that greater problems will require your attention; East Timor, however, is not a new case; it was entrusted to the Secretary-General by General Assembly resolution 37/30.

East Timor was the object of eight General Assembly and two Security Council resolutions; the latter urged Jakarta to immediately withdraw all its forces from East Timor.

Cases such as Kuwait, showed how the international community and nations vigorously repudiate acts of expansionism, perpetrated in total violation of international law and norms. Other cases, such as Cambodia, on the other hand, reveal the good will of the international community and of the nations to settle differences and conflicts through the most appropriate means, i.e., the path of dialogue.

Resolution 37/30 mandated the Secretary-General of the UN to initiate consultations with the parties involved. The wrong interpretation given to the spirit and the letter of this resolution, derives from the lack of definition of the substantive question. If we talk about international law, than the East Timorese people should have that right -- if we spell-out those universal rights, such principles should be applied to the Maubere people as well.

In East Timor, an armed conflict persists, for 16 years; in East Timor, a generalized political resistance by our people persists against Indonesian military occupation. From September 1975, Indonesia has been violating our borders culminating this act of aggression with the murder of five Australian journalists who were witness to this act of aggression. On 7 December 1975 it invaded. As a result of the vandalism that followed the invasion, more than 80% of the population abandoned their homes and their possessions and moved themselves up to the mountains, in a natural and spontaneous demonstration of their repudiation of foreign

aggression, and determined to defend the sovereignty of their motherland.

Until August 1977, the aggressors only controlled the main roads and a few villages. The following months, the Jakarta generals launched major "search and destroy" operations against several resistance bases. This offensive only ended in November 1978. Using "scorch earth" tactics, with daily air, sea and artillery heavy bombings, the invading army forced the people to constant displacement. Many died as a result of the shelling and from starvation and disease. The physical exhaustion these people endured under such a large-scale offensive, weighed considerably in their decision to give themselves up to the enemy. Numerous massacres were perpetrated as the people surrendered themselves. Horrible crimes that only the occupation forces could commit. The people, confined to areas surrounding the villages, totally controlled and under all kinds of restrictions, succumbed to starvation and disease. During the years of 1978 and 1980 burials were a daily event.

Besides the starvation and disease, '79 and '80 were also the years when the occupying forces emptied the prisons - it must be mentioned that there were prisons in all of the administrative councils and in the majority of the outposts -- where the surrendering cadres and community members who were active in organizing and mobilizing the masses during the difficult period of the resistance were sent. Individual and collective killings systematically happened on a daily basis. If people were missing, that meant only that the place where those victims were killed was unknown, because there was no doubt that they were being taken to "Jakarta". It was during that period of hunger and strict surveillance that the Indonesian forces killed many villagers, who were compelled to walk to surrounding bush areas to gather some leaves, wild roots or fruit to feed themselves in order to survive. They would not spare any one, be it the elderly, women and children.

In the first half of 1981, a new wave of imprisonments and killings shook the territory, especially Dili. Ataúro opened up its doors to accommodate tens of thousands of deported people. Torture, as a generalized practice, increased. Violence, persecution, massacres and extorsion of the victims were all elements of the climate of terror. A person walking on a road to another village would be killed for not carrying a "surat jalan" (travel document); a person would be killed for staying longer at the farm and return to the "apel" (compulsory assembly at designated centers) of people at late hours. Killings would happen also inside the farm, through which the Indonesian troops would return from their raids against the guerrillas. Women were raped by entire platoons; women were shot to death when they tried to resist; parents were tortured and killed in the presence of their children and husbands in the presence of their wives.

This prolonged situation was caused by incessant hunger, because no crops could be produced, because it became very hard for anything or anyone just to survive.

By the end of 1983 and throughout 1984, another wave of imprisonments, killings and missing people left all of East Timor in pain and bereavement. It should be pointed out that from March to July 1983, a cease-fire agreement between the warring parties was in effect. In contradiction to the intentions that led to the establishment of a dialogue, Jakarta decided to threaten to decimate us if we would not surrender, taking a provocative attitude, in a clear violation of the cease-fire agreements.

From 1985 to the present, the threats and particularly the persecution carried out by a vast secret police organization, as well as the imprisonments have continued unabated, an unequivocal evidence that Jakarta carried on this intolerable practice because it felt it was being backed by many Western countries, which frequently use double standards in similar situations of total disrespect for the fundamental human rights.

The brutal repression that unfolded in the wake of the illegal occupation of East Timor culminated in the Santa Cruz killings of 12 November 1991 and the cases of arrests and torture that followed the incident.

Mr. Secretary-General,

We can state, with all conviction, that more than 200,00 (two hundred thousand) Timorese lost their lives as a consequence of the bloody invasion and illegal occupation of East Timor.

The events of 12 November are a sufficient indication of that. While the estimated death toll was 150 to 180, Jakarta's official version referred only 19 (later on changing it to 50, due to international pressure) and therefore one could raise the question that the official version of 60,00 to 80,000 should in all fairness have the reservations of the international community, namely the United Nations. The Indonesian Government has adopted the policy of playing down its practices of torture and denying the killings. Before the UN Commission on Human Right and its Sub-Commission, the Indonesian delegates tried to subvert the ethical, moral and political values of Human Rights, bringing up the absurd justification that any statements denouncing violations of human rights in East Timor are "false accusations by people who don't like Indonesia".

Jakarta has always opposed access to East Timor of any international, independent inquiry missions, alleging that it is an Indonesian internal affair. Not even the presence of the U.N. Special Rapporteur, Mr. Peter Koojmans, could curb the policy of genocide in which the Jakarta leadership have been engaged. President Soeharto managed to win the sympathy of friendly countries like the U.S., Australia, the Netherlands, Japan and Canada, because they were satisfied with the "evidence" that the number of people killed in the Santa Cruz incident was 50, not 19. His efforts, however, did dot change in the least the Indonesian policy toward East Timor.

After the two high-ranking officers who were made responsible for the incident were transferred, there was an official statement that revealed the true intentions of] the new Military Commander. Control measures were stepped up, with "kopassus" (elite troops) posted across all Dili neighbourhoods and other places in the interior, in addition to "ABRI" (Indonesian Armed Forces) platoons, also called "masuk Desa", supposedly deployed to "mingle" with the local population. These troops subject the people, on a daily basis, to a program that has as one of its goals an almost absolute control of the youth, by monitoring their movements and activities.

Young men from all "Desas" (villages) summoned to go to the Dili Kodim (District Command), were themselves suddenly taken on trucks to Taibesse, the barracks for battalion 744, to receive military training. Daily sports activities are mandatory in some "desas", and that

became a sure way of controlling the youth. The authorities continue to make persecutions and to expand and strengthen the secret police apparatus. The Indonesians themselves say that the "the rule of 'manis' (sweetness) is over, from now on there will be a 'senjata' (armed) rule".

And it will continue that way, as long as the occupation forces remain in the territory. The repression exerted by Indonesia is a consequence of this situation and, as long as there is imposition by the force of arms by one side, there will always be a rejection of a foreign presence by the other side.

Jakarta claims that the situation is an internal affair and supports its claim with the "Declaration of Balibó" as the document that gave origin to the "7th July integration". Many East Timorese, including the UDT Vice-President, João Carrascalão, have denounced the farce of the "Provisional Assembly". The key argument in support of the "internal affair" allegation is that, through the so-called "Provisional Assembly", the people of East Timor "chose integration by their free will".

The late Bishop Dom Martinho Lopes, who witnessed all the tragic events in East Timor since the beginning of the invasion, up until his own expulsion from the territory, eight years later, always spoke out loud and clear, protesting the fact the no one ever asked the Maubere people whether they wanted integration or not. I must add that such act, presented as "an act of self-determination", was implemented at a time when the vast majority of the East Timorese people were under heavy pressure from the invading forces with constant air, sea and land attacks.

I must point out, Mr. Secretary-General, that besides the facts of the tragic situation of the people who resisted in the mountains, there are testimonies by those who witnessed and/or participated against their own will, who declared that those "elected" to the so-called "People's Assembly" were recruited by the Indonesian military.

Recently, Bishop Ximenes Belo portrayed the prevailing situation in a letter addressed to the (outgoing) U. N. Secretary-General, asking for a referendum to be held, because the people of East Timor was never given the opportunity to express their will freely. He said: "we are dying out a People and as a Nation". In fact, many governments, I would even say, all of the other countries' governments that, although for various reasons may recognize the "sovereignty of Indonesia over East Timor" as a fact, do not agree with the way in which the "integration into Indonesia" was done. Under international law, this act can only be considered illegal annexation of East Timor, carried out with the use of force.

The United Nations and its appropriate bodies have condemned the act of aggression and military occupation perpetrated on East Timor. International organizations, namely the European Community, European Parliament, Council of Europe and other international organizations, prominent individual entities, and parliaments and governments from various countries have also condemned Indonesia and urge all parties involved, including the East Timorese, to search for a negotiated solution to the conflict.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Mankind can breath the winds of democratic change. Recent and current developments in some regions on the globe seem to have revived a phenomenon that belonged -- people's nationalism! It has been proven beyond doubt that the use of force can put down rebellions, but it cannot destroy people's minds, and that repression can subjugate a people -- an entire people, but it will not destroy those people's aspirations, no matter in which latitude on the globe or at which point in history.

Self-determination as a principle and as a right is a most cherished aspiration for any people in the world. Self-determination is a legal process, in which a people determines its identity and decides on its destiny and therefore any act of self-determination must be exercised in freedom.

The New World Order is being shaped out of the Cold War and the collapse (surprisingly sudden) of the iron curtain. The process of democratic renewal, whose effects are being felt the world over, reflects the awareness of the peoples that materialistic deals are not satisfactory when one's spirit is being oppressed and when one's body is being subject to violence, when justice is ignored and freedom and reason truth are suppressed.

All the peoples in the world want to walk hand-in-hand towards a future of peace and freedom on our planet. The settlement of many conflicts underscores the validity and fairness of dialogue, as the basic principle for good relations among human beings and among peoples and nations.

The signing of the peace accords in El Salvador augurs a promising mandate for Your Excellency. May we convey to you our best wishes for success in attaining the goals of peace and the strengthening of democracy, freedom and human rights and the narrowing of the gap between the North and the South. Dialogue is the only appropriate path to eliminate differences and the fairest means to bring together warring factions and the most appropriate way to seek solutions and build up peace.

What we need is political will on the part of everyone concerned, particularly the leadership, so that, through dialogue we can continue to build, piece by piece, a world of enduring peace. The present international political situation makes it easier for dialogue to prevail as the most appropriate way toward the strengthening of the New Order. We can no longer rely just on idealism -- the changes dictate otherwise -- the intransigent defense of the human rights and the fundamental rights of the peoples. We can no longer rely on idealism -- the future of the peoples compels us to do otherwise -- to defend of universal principles. We can no longer rely on idealism -- human conscience compels us to do otherwise -- to defend justice and liberty!

Realism, in the future, cannot continue to be dictated by the interests of the strong and powerful. Realism, in the future, must be more humane and more faithful to the foundations of freedom and democracy. Only a more humane and less egocentric vision, only a more solidary and less interest-guided, and only a fairer and more balanced and less dishonest -- on the part of the rich and economically-strong countries will help find the right direction to alleviate the sacrifices endured by Third World peoples. When everything still has to revolve

around economic interests, when everything has to be defined along the lines of regional strategies, when everything is measured on a scale of advantages and disadvantages, the economic gaps will prevail, political incoherence will prevail and the New World Order will be, after all, marked by the submission of the poor to the callousness of the strong and the relinquishing of the weak.

But we believe in the good will of the human beings. We believe that things will be reestablished in a positive way and that the Middle East talks under way will result in substantive agreements which will help foster new Arab-Israeli relations and enable the Palestinians to have future with rights to which they are entitled. We believe that the profound differences that became an obstacle to the Western Sahara referendum to be held within the established schedule, will be overcome, for the benefit of all parties involved, and that, within the framework of the United Nations, a peaceful, just and lasting settlement can be achieved.

We also believe that the irreversible process of the dismantling of apartheid will continue its course without further delay, toward the establishment of a democratic and multiracial system, where all individuals are equal, with the same rights and obligations.

We believe that the processes of national reconciliation under way, in Africa, in Asia and in Latin America will bring peace and concord among men.

We believe that peace is not the privilege of just a few peoples, because peace is essentially an aspiration of mankind.

Only justice can ensure peace, because injustice means total disregard for the universal values of freedom and lawfulness [the rule of law?]. East Timor is a case that falls under international law. The prevailing situation in East Timor constitutes a violation of international norms and a rejection of universal principles.

We also believe that the time has come for the Government of Indonesia -- a great, thriving Third World nation, to reflect upon the need to take the right step, in the right direction.

Unfortunately now, having exhausted all the arguments to justify, before the Western world, the act of aggression against East Timor and its military occupation of the territory, recently Mr. Ali Alatas, referring to the massacre of 12 November, brought up again the initial argument of the "existence of a Communist threat". A minimum of common sense would have helped the Indonesian Foreign Affairs Ministry to think a little before saying something of this nature. We believe, even so, that the new thinking fostered by these changes will cause an effect on the Indonesian leadership, prompting them to reconsider their attitude of inflexibility before the international community, even if only for the sake of affirming the principles that served as a basis for the foundation of the MNA.

Mr. Secretary-General,

Your Excellency has a mandate, under resolution 37/30 to deal with the question of East Timor.

Portugal, as the Administering Power for the territory, which is recognized by the international community, has stated the need for participation by the East Timorese, in tripartite talks. On our side, I would like to reiterate our total willingness to participate in a dialogue. Our proposal of a dialogue without pre-conditions, which was extensively endorsed by various international organizations and various countries' parliaments, politicians and individual entities, as well as by several governments and Human Rights organizations, has the objective of enabling all parties involved to be on a equal footing, so a discussion can be initiated on ways and means more consistent and satisfactory to all involved, for a just, lasting and internationally acceptable solution.

However, we appeal to Your Excellency, Mr. Secretary-General, to replace the mediator in this process. It has been demonstrated on several instances that the role of mediation is crucial to advancing or thwarting efforts. And when those efforts are made within the framework of the United Nations, the impartiality and the fairness of the UN representatives are a moral imperative.

Lastly, Mr. Secretary-General, I have the honor to inform Your Excellency that there will soon be general elections in Indonesia. Jakarta has in the past used the elections to affirm that the people of East Timor has already demonstrated twice the validity of the act of integration.

We believe that it would be enough to mention the massacre of 12 November for people to grasp the true meaning of "popular will", expressed in the past two elections. With this rationale, it will not be surprising to hear about a massive participation of the people, who voted for the all-mighty Golkar. As a matter-of-fact, instructions were already issued to the effect that everyone should vote on Mr. Golkar, in order to spare retaliation.

The "Lusitania Expresso", which is on a peaceful mission, has been the object of repeated threats of destruction; its mere presence provoked unprecedented restrictive measures against East Timorese youths; more than one hundred college students were arrested and taken to the Battalion 744 barracks, in Taibesse. In addition to that, dozens of other students were drafted to receive mandatory military instruction, a preventive measure to keep the young people under control at the arrival of the ship.

Situations such as these, which reveal the kind of repression exerted under military occupation, take all the credibility away from the elections, which are expected to take place in the next months. It is simply inconceivable that anyone would try and make believe that there is a possibility to contest the situation, through a so-called abstention by a people victim of repression and control.

Please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Signed.- Kay Rala Xanana Gusmão
Member of the CNMR,
Commander of FALINTIL

General Headquarters of the General Command of the Maubere Resistance, East Timor, 31 January 1992